

favor vote aye, opposed nay. Have you all voted? Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 27 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the advancement of LB 1292.

SENATOR HALL: LB 1292 is advanced. LB 1161, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: LB 1161, introduced by Senator Withem. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 19, referred to the Education Committee, advanced to General File. There are no amendments to the bill.

SENATOR HALL: Senator Withem, on the advancement of the bill.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Mr. President, members of the body, LB 1161 is a bill that I introduced, in many ways in response to some of the debates and discussions and issues I have seen evolving in the area of education policy during my years of chairing the Education Committee. And I've become concerned that there is a tremendous dispute going on in the area of education policy and a gulf that has developed. On one side of that gulf you have individuals who are very honest and very dedicated individuals trying to do what they think are the best for young people, trying to put into place policies that they feel will improve education. On the other side of that gulf you have equally committed, in some cases more committed, individuals who have grave concerns about what those policies changes will mean. This bill does not take sides on that dispute. What this bill does is it, without saying so in the bill, but the rationale behind the bill is that we're taking note that that dispute is going on. Unfortunately, what has happened with that dispute, I think, as opposed to both sides looking at the other as caring, well-meaning individuals, we see increased defenses put up on both sides of the fence. And this bill is designed to encourage communication over those issues of education reform, and also to make those communications take place at the local level. What this bill does is it requires every school district in the state to have a policy that relates to parental involvement in schools. And this policy shall include such items as how the school district will provide access to parents concerning textbooks, tests and other curriculum materials, how the school district will handle requests by parents to attend and monitor courses, et cetera, under what circumstances parents may ask that their children be excused from school activities, how the